DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 028 184 24 TE 001 337

Unit 1203: The Social and Psychological Implications of Language.
Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis. Center for Curriculum Development in English.
Spons Agency-Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.
Bureau No-BR-5-0658
Pub Date 68
Contract-OEC-SAE-3-10-010
Note-87p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.50 HC-$4.45
Descriptors-*Curriculum Guides, Dialects, English Curriculum, *English Instruction, *Grade 12, Instructional Materials, *Language, Language Usage, *Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, Psychology, Secondary Education, Sociolinguistics, Sociology, Stereotypes, Teaching Guides, Teaching Methods
Identifiers-Minnesota Center Curriculum Development in English, *Project English

Designed as a synthesis of concepts familiar to students having studied the earlier Minnesota Project English units or as an introduction for other students, this unit for grade 12 treats the role of language in the social and psychological development of man. Alternative introductions to the unit are provided: one concentrating on definitions of language, man's unique symbol-making ability, and the importance of language; the other dealing with what is meant by "knowing" a language. The unit then develops concepts related to the role of language in social interaction, language as a reflection of culture, the relationship between language and reality, the process of communication, interferences based on a person's language or dialect, levels of usage, and stereotyping by language. The concepts are presented through sample lectures, discussion questions, and suggested readings; additional readings for gifted students and a bibliography on the role of language are included. (JS)

ED028184

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Unit 1203

The Social and Psychological Implications of Language

Grade Twelve

CAUTIONARY NOTE

These materials are for experimental use by Project English fellows and their associates who contributed to their development.

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MATERIALS NEEDED

Lotz, John. "Linguistics:Symbols Make Man," in Sol Saporta (Ed.) Psycholinguistics, (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961).

Hockett, Charles. "13 Design Features of Animal Communication," Scientific American, September, 1960.

Hall, Robert A. Linguistics and Your Language, (N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1960).

Brown, Roger. Words and Things, (N.Y.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

Sapir, Edward. Culture, Language, and Personality, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964).

Wells, H.G. "The Country of the Blind"

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. Language, Thought, and Reality

PURPOSES OF THE UNIT

This unit could be used for either of two basic purposes, depending upon the background of the students being taught. For students who have previously been taught MPEC units, this one could serve as a summary and synthesis of earlier units which introduced concepts contained here. For students who have not yet met the concepts included, the unit could serve as an introduction to some of the social and psychological dimensions of language. The teacher will want to preview the unit, especially the outline following this statement, and decide on the most profitable way of using the unit.

The unit attempts to treat the social and psychological importance of language in systematic fashion. The assumption is made that twelfth grade students in their individual and classroom experience, have encountered instances of linguistic stereotyping, in-group language, or inferences of values drawn from language usage. The aim of this unit is to help students analyze these experiences as objectively as possible.

A spirit of tentativeness on the part of students and teacher is necessary in this unit. Much of the information and many of the activities of the unit are designed to raise questions about how social values are developed and transmitted through language. Teachers should not allow students to conclude that the final word on social and psychological problems is contained in this unit. Rather, students should be encouraged to recognize the unit for what it is: a glimpse at the substantial role of language in the social and psychological make-up of man.

The teacher will note that alternative introductions to the unit are provided. The more saaisfactory introduction will, of course, be selected by the teacher. The material included in the other introduction will then follow as part of the unit.

INTRODUCTION A

To the teacher:

The following concepts are to be introduced in this portion:

1. Man is a symbol-using animal.
2. Language is consequential to the nature of man.
3. Language is time-binding and space-binding.
4. Significant differences exist between animal and human communication.
5. Language both unites and divides mankind.
6. The term language is usually applied to the system of learned, conventional, oral symbols held in common by members of some community for the conduct of relatively precise patterns of human interaction. It can be viewed as a social product and as personal behavior.

Procedures:

1. Introductory lecture or discussion (see below).
2. Sheet of quotations on the importance of language to be read and discussed. (Students may be asked to add to this list as the unit progresses.)
3. Essay "Symbols Make Man."
4. General discussion of animal communication and Hockett essay.
5. General discussion of isolated or feral children (optional).
6. Summary and transition to how speech is learned.

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION
(May be read to class)

Through your twelve or so years of schooling and your seventeen or so years of living you no doubt have heard many attempts to define mankind. Some persons would emphasize biological features in making the definition and would point to characteristics such as a computer-type brain or the apposable (opposable) thumb of the human hand. Other persons would emphasize spiritual characteristics, as William Faulkner did in his famous Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech when, in speaking of man, he said, "He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of com-

Sample Introduction Continued

passion and sacrifice and endurance."

During this unit we'll be examining the case for including language in any discussion of what makes man a special animal. Of course, this doesn't mean that other characteristics, biological or spiritual for example, are being dismissed. In fact, many of you may end up thinking about how language as an essential part of humanity and other parts are related. For example, you may wonder how the biological feature of a computer-type brain and the existence of language are related.

Nonetheless, our attention is going to be on language as a characteristic human activity. Language as human activity has attracted the thought and attention of a variety of scholars. In a few minutes we'll look at some brief statements on the importance of language, statements made by a variety of notable persons.

Before we look at those statements, though, we should try to get some notion as to what the statements are referring to, a working definition of language, in other words. I'll read a definition which should suit our purposes, then I'd like to call your attention to a few key terms in the definition.

Write the underlined terms on the chalkboard.

"Language is the system of learned, conventional

oral symbols held in common by the members of some community for the conduct of relatively precise patterns of human interaction. It can be viewed as a social product and as personal behavior."

I'm not expecting you to memorize this definition; right now . In fact, much of the unit is devoted to examining the implications of such a definition. But you should keep some of these terms in mind as we go along.

Discussion of the Definition

Sample Questions and Comments

1. Notice that the definition includes the term system. This suggests something structured and orderly. From earlier lessons can you remember what kind of structures there are in language?

   (structures of word order, sounds word elements, meanings)

2. Now what of the term learned? Is anything suggested to you by this term?

   (language is non-instinctive; it is learned from persons around us)

NOTE: In this definition, conventional in preference to arbitrary is used in order to avoid the connotation of strict individual authoritarianism which arbitrary has for many students.

3. Next conventional. In what sense is language conventional?

   (language depends on agreed upon structures and meanings to do its job)

4. Then what of oral symbols?

   (in a linguistic sense, speech is the primary form of language; the words and arrangements we use are audible symbolism; language is an elaborate system of symbols)

5. Now, what about community?

   (try to evoke the response that each individual belongs to several linguistic communities: family, peers, classroom, interest groups--all of which may be communities in a non-linguistic sense as well)

6. Next patterns of human interaction. What are some of the interactions we carry on through language? Can you think of any which do not involve language?

7. In what sense is language a social product?

   (among other things, language is learned and modified in social contexts)

8. Finally then, personal behavior.

   (much of the evidence on which we judge other persons and on which we are judged is our use of language)

Statements on the Importance of Language

Sample Introduction

What we must not lose sight of is that what we've just discussed (in terms which may seem too numerous to you) is language; that which is happening right now as I speak. What we have just gone through is a relatively detailed definition of the system we use to carry on most of our communication.

Earlier I said that the importance of language has attracted the attention of a variety of notable persons. Aldous Huxley, best known to most of us as author of Brave New World, illustrates the interest of a serious student of human society in his essay "Words and Behavior," in which he writes

(The teacher may prefer to have the statement reproduced for class reading)

"Words for the thread on which we string our experiences. Without them we should live spasmodically and intermittently. . .The dumb creature lives a life made up of discrete and mutually irrelevant episodes. Such as it is, the consistency of human experiences are strung. We are purposeful because

we can describe our feelings in rememberable words, can justify and rationalize our desires in terms of some kind of argument. Faced by an enemy we do not allow an itch to distract us from our emotions; the mere word "enemy" is enough to keep us reminded of our hatred, to convince us that we do well to be angry. Similarly the word "love" bridges for us those chasms of momentary indifference and boredom which gape from time to time between even the most ardent lovers. Feeling and desire provide us with our motive power; words give continuity to what we do and to a considerable extent determine our direction. Inappropriate and badly chosen words vitiate thought and lead to wrong or foolish conduct."

Distribute copies of quotation sheet to the class. (see next page)

Sample Introduction

The quotations which you read here indicate some of the thoughts men have had about the importance of language. It may be of interest to you that these statements come from persons apparently poles apart in their interests:

1. A classical scholar and Late Elizabethan writer- Ben Jonson.
2. A phsicist and philosopher of science- Neils Bohr.
3. A Romantic poet-Percy Shelley.

Suggested Discussion

Their appreciation of the importance of language brings them to gether in some fashion, however. What kinds of concerns do you see reflected in these statements?

(Man's involvement with language-Bohr)

(Language as a human characteristic-Vendryes)

(Language for insight into men-Jonson, Roberts)

(The relation of thought and language-Shelley, Roberts)

(The power of language-Conrad)

Have you heard any of these statements before?

Are there any additional statements about the importance and power of language that you can recall right now?

You may wish to keep this list of quotations and add to it as we go ahead with the unit.

Using the essay "Symbols Make Man"

The essay, to be read by the students, appears on the next page

Sample Introduction May be read to class

The brief quotations which we discussed earlier are just that--brief. Now I'm going to ask you to read an essay in which some of the ideas suggested by the quotations are spelled out and discussed in more detail and with more examples.

Distribute copies of the essay, "Linguistics: Symbols Make Man" by John Lotz. This essay can be found in Sol Saporta's (Ed.) Psycholinguistics (N.Y.: Holt Rinehart, and Winston, 1961.)

Notice that part of the rather complicated title of the essay is "Symbols Make Man." This part of the title gives us a clue as to what the essay is going to contend. This contention, that man is unique in his ability to create and use symbols, is by no means limited to this essay. Many philosophers, psychologists, and other thoughtful persons make the same contention. You might look upon this essay as an example of this line of reasoning and, if you have not heard the argument before, as an introduction to this idea.

To be read and discussed by students.

STATEMENTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE

Ben Jonson: "Language most showeth a man; speak that I may see thee."

Neils Bohr: "We live suspended in language."

Percy Shelley: "He gave man speech, and speech created thought, Which is the measure of the universe."

Vendryes: "Man became Homo sapiens because he Homo loquens (man talking)."

Joseph Conrad: "Give me the right word and the right accent and I will move the world."

Paul Roberts: "Someone has said we begin by speaking as we think and end by thinking as we speak. The best way to understand how our minds work is to study our language. Perhaps it is the only way."

As you read the essay, there are several questions I'd like you to keep in mind. Review the questions before you begin to read. Jot down those points in the essay which seem relevant to the questions. We'll use the questions as a guide for discussion after you have completed your reading. Here are the questions:

Place the question on the chalkboard and ask students to copy them in a notebook or distribute dittoed copies of the questions to the class.

The questions are the suggested points to be made in a discussion.

1. What is the importance of language presented in this essay?

   ("Human existence is welded to language." Lan- makes man.)

2. What link is established between language and culture?

   (Makes culture and accumulation of knowledge possible.)

3. How does language serve to divide mankind?

   (3-4,000 spoken languages--can't understand one another--experience of an American in Europe.)

4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of symbolic language?

   (Advantages:
   1. No set limit to number of symbolic elements.
   2. Can be added, mized, borrowed, or newly created in any language.
   3. Can shift their center of reference.

   Disadvantages:
   1. Because of their enormous number and complexity, they are difficult to master.
   2. Can disguise thought as well as clarify it.
   3. Can assume a magical importance.
   4. Can carry emotional significance.)

5. What characteristics of human language are presented?

   (1. Man is a symbol using animal.
   2. Language is consequential to the nature of man.

3. Language is time-binding and space-binding.
4. Significant differences exist between animal and human communication.
5. Language both unites and divides mankind.
6. Language is learned.
7. Language makes culture and society possible.)

6. According to the essay, what is the function of linguistics?

(The spoken word-deals with expression and communication. Is a basic science. Analysis of the role that language plays in every science.)

7. Notice the discussion of the communication system of bees. In what sense is it a language? Are any of the characteridtics of human language missing in the communication system of bees?

(It is functional--it serves the basic needs of the bee society for food, storage, and shelter. Differs from human language:
1. Is a closed system--no new signals can be added.
2. Is stereotyped, involves no learning.
3. Effectiveness restricted to the few bees that can be in direct contact with the body of the dancing bee.
4. No time perspective possible--must always refer to the present.
5. Transfer of information from hive to hive rarely takes place.

The reference to the communicative system of bees in the Lotz essay furnishes a convenient transition to this point.

Sample Introduction and Discussion

Among the many points we touched on in reading the essay by John Lotz (see page 10) was the description of the system of communication used by bees. Many students of language investigate and refer to the communication systems of lower animals because such investigations and references seem to give one kind of perspective for understanding human language.

Important: Emphasize the underlined point.

Now, we're going to pay some attention to the communication system of animals too and for the very same reasons that a student of language does: a perspective for understanding human language. I emphasize this point because I don't want you to believe that the English department is now teaching biology and, more important, we mustn't forget that our concern is human language.

We know that many of the lower animals communicate with each other and that humans can communicate with some animals. Beavers slap their tails on the water to warn each other of approaching danger. Crows seem to have rather special warning cries. Dolphins can communicate with each other about the location of food (and they apparently can learn to reproduce a few human words). What are some additional examples of animal communication?

> (a pet dog who wants to be let out of the house; the sounds and stances of an angry animal; the cry of an injured or hungry animal; mating calls; flight calls)

Intuitively, most of us I think would insist that the language of human beings and the language of other animals are different somehow. But how? It's at this point that we can get a clearer picture of human language--that is, if we can find some answer to how the systems differ.

Discussion of Animal Communication, Continued.

Using Hockett excerpt (see next page).

One difference we might point to is a quantitative one. That is, we might insist that men simply use more language than any other animal. This probably is quite true. But this isn't an entirely satisfactory explanation of the differences. In fact, a teacher who was trying to teach some of this to junior high school students a few years ago made this statement and had the class insist that animals were probably pretty sensible for avoiding too-frequent use of language.

There do seem to be some other important differences, differences other than frequency of use. I'd like you to look at this excerpt from an article which appeared in the magazine Scientific American. The author, Charles Hockett, is a linguist and anthropoligist. What he attempted to do in this article was to describe thirteen characteristics of animal communication. He also suggests how these characteristics or "design features" appear in human language.

Distribute copies of the excerpt, "Thirteen Design Features of Animal Communication," Scientific American, September, 1960.

Notice that only six of the thirteen features are listed here. These are the ones of most interest to us in this unit. Read through the list now and pay special attention to numbers four, five, and six. As you read, try to think of whether these characteristics of human language. If so try to

think of how you could illustrate that this is so.

Suggested Discussion

NOTE: Strong emphasis should be placed on points four, five, and six. For less-able students, information on productivity and displacement in MPEC Unit 701 may be useful. For more-able students Roger Brown's Words and Things is a good source.

1. Are there any terms used by Hockett similar, equivalent, or identical to those used in the definition of language we discussed earlier?

   (learned and arbitrary)

2. How could one go about showing that language is learned? Can this be said of animals do you think?

   (Simply by looking at little children as they learn language (see next discussion on feral children). Animals can learn to respond to human language, but they cannot vary their own vocal sounds very much-a dog, for example, is limited to barking, snarling, and growling, Bees, as we saw, are very limited in what they can communicate. They do not learn their dance--it is instinctive.)

3. What is cited as being almost unique in man? Can you give examples of displacement in language?

   (displacement. Plans for this evening; reports of what happened years ago; speculation about what is happening elsewhere.)

4. Can you think of examples of what Hockett calls productivity? (See any MPEC unit dealing with changes in lexicon for numerous examples.)

   (New words, e.g. "togetherness"
   simile-She was bubbling like a coffee pot.
   metaphor-She was a bubbling coffee pot.)

5. Using Hockett's terms, what can be said about between human and animal language?

   (the differences are qualitative; only human language has all of the design features Hockett describes.)

OPTIONAL
Discussion of Feral Children

NOTE: The teacher may wish to use this topic as an individual or group assignment for selected parts of the class rather than introducing this to an entire class. In this case, a student or group of students should be asked to seek out information on the several cases alluded to in the brief discussion suggested here. A useful first source is Brown's Words and Things.

Sample Lecture

Another kind of perspective about the more nor- uses of human language is available if we examine cases of feral children, those "wildlings" who grew up without human contacts. There have been several cases of human children growing up with wild animals: The Hessian wolf-boy of 1349; a boy raised by bears in Lithuania, discovered in 1661; the wild-boy of Hanover in 1724; the wild-boy of Aveyron, 1791; and Kamala and Amala, the wolf-children of India in 1850. In tall tales even Pecos Bill was supposedly raised by coyotes.

Several such cases were known to the great Swedish scientist Karl Linne (Linnaeus) as he wrote his system of classifications for plants and animals.

Feral Children Continued

His Systemae Naturae listed Homo Ferus (L. wild man) as a subdivision of the genus Homo Sapien. Published in 1758, this work identified Homo Ferus by characteristics: tetrapus (goes on all fours), hursutus (hairy or shaggy), and of the most interest to us mutus (without speech). The cases which I mentioned earlier generally have conformed to two of Linne's specifications: they have gone on all fours and have lacked speech.

In addition to wild children we also hear occasionally of children kept isolated from all or most human contacts, perhaps locked in lonely rooms year after year. Such cases have been well-authenticated and in each instance such children have been badly retarded or totally lacking speech. Severe emotional problems usually go along with such cases, too.

Finally, we know that some children stricken with congenital diseases or diseases during infancy become deaf and blind. These chilfren cannot develop language the way most of us do. Helen Keller is an example of such a case.

See MPEC Unit 701 for additional information about the linguistic development of Helen Keller.

1. What do the cases of feral, isolated, and deaf-blind children have in common?

Sample discussion

2. What accounts for the lack of language in such cases?

   (lack of the opportunity or lack of the necessary equipment to hear language)

3. Which of Hockett's design features is most clearly illustrated by these cases?

(language is learned)

Points to be reviewed in summarizing this Introduction

1. How have we defined language? (See page 6 and following)

2. What kinds of concerns were reflected in the statements about the importance of language? (See pages 9 through 10E)

3. What major differences exist between human and animal language? (See page 13)

4. What are some of the implications of saying that human language is learned? (See pages through 17)

INTRODUCTION B

This portion of the unit concentrates on language learning and concepts related to language learning. The teacher will wish to make necessary revisions in the presentation depending upon whether this portion serves as an introduction or a part of the body of the unit

Sample Introduction

What are we trying to investigate in this unit is something of the social and psychological importance of language. We can get a glimpse of this importance by making a few observations of how people grow and develop in their uses of language.

One way of getting into this is to ask the question, "What do we mean when we say that a person knows a language?" This is a simple question with an amazingly complicated set of answers to it. All of us in this room have gone through the experience of learning at least one language, our native language. Some of us may have learned another language in addition to our native one. On top of all this we should, if we're to be accurate about this, say that each of us is still learning something about language and how to use it.

In a very important sense, learning (including

learning language) is a psychological and a social thing. The importance of language in our learning can be thought of in two general ways:

1. By studying how we learn language itself we can get some clue as to how we learn other things.
2. Much of everything we learn is learned through language--we imitate others, we listen to others, we read, sometimes we sense what others never or seldom say. Through this, we learn.

Let's return to the question I posed earlier: What do we mean when we say that a person knows a language? We'd probably be willing to say that each of us in the room knows a language. So let's start with ourselves. What are some of the things we know? What are some of the things we can do which make us willing to say "we know the language"?

Sample Discussion

NOTE: Students should be given the opportunity to offer their ideas, but the teacher should guide the discussion so that it reveals the points listed to the right. These points and those added by the class should be listed on the chalkboard.

1. Suppose we look at this simple sentence: Tom gave the book to Ed. (Write on chalkboard.)

When you hear or read that sentence do you have much trouble determining who gave what to whom?

How about this sentence?

The book was given to Ed by Tom. (Write on chalkboard.)

Is there any generalization we can make about what we know based on these examples?

(We know something of word order in English. We can use the syntax.)

2. Suppose you heard this sentence: "He had many bills for pills." Think now of the words bills

and pills. What is it that we're able to recognize in these two words?

(A relatively small difference in sounds. We recognize the phonemes.)

3. Suppose you read this statement: "The systole, the contraction of the heart chambers, . . . " Could you make a good guess at what systole means? What is the process we go through here?

(We use the structural and contextual clues of language.)

Important: Emphasize these reference categories (#4). The teacher and the class should supplement the examples suggested here.

4. Now let's think of some words and pairs of words that we encounter frequently:

a. What is suggested by the use of words such as here and there? This and that?

(Location in space. One thing is closer than the other.)

b. What is suggested by the little word and?

(Often a cumulative or additive relationship.)

c. How about a word such as because or since?

(Often indicates cause and effect, although not always accurately doing so.)

d. What difficulties might a foreigh student encounter with words and phrases such as not infrequently ("This happens not infrequently.") or extremely good as compared with very good?

(They might easily misunderstand because they do not know the categories.)

Language Learning in Children
Sample Introduction

From our discussion of a few of the things we mean when we say someone knows a language I hope you have some understanding of the complexity of what we're examining. Those of us who "know" a

language have reached this stage of complexity over a long period of time, since we started to learn to talk at all, in fact. During this part of the unit we're going to examine some of the steps most of us seem to go through on the way to learning our language.

Procedure: Duplicate copies of Robert Hall's "The Achievement of the Six-year-old" from Linguistics and Your Language (N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1950.) Beginning with "We Often Tend to Think" and end-with "The Way We Pronounce th."

In order to establish a starting point for this part of the unit I'd like you to read a brief portion of Robert A. Hall's book Linguistics and Your Language. In this selection Hall discusses some of the things a six-year-old child is able to do with language. Before you begin to read, examine the questions I'm placing on the chalkboard. Keep the questions in mind as you read and we will base our discussion of the excerpts on the points suggested by the questions.

Write questions on chalkboard

1. How does Hall distinguish between learning vocabulary and learning structures?

   (Vocabulary-keep learning all our lives; structures-pretty well known by age six.)

2. What dies Hall claim is the level of knowledge about structures of the language attained by six-year-olds?

   (Almost complete)

3. What does Hall mean by "analogical substitutions in speech? What is his attitude toward such examples of substitutions?

   (substituting by a known pattern; imitative errors e.g. walk-walked and took-tooked are natural, even adults do this. Any common "slips of the tongue"--tooths for teeth, etc.)

4. What is Hall's argument concerning teaching the sounds of speech to youngsters in school?

   (Should be taught only to those who need remedial help.)

5. What mistake is made by persons who tell children to make the sound th as a combination of the sounds t and h?

   (They are confusing the sounds of the language with the letters which represent the sounds.)

The Development of Language as the Child Learns It.

NOTE: The concepts and information contained in this portion of the unit may be presented in a variety of ways. The sample presentation is a combination of lecture and discussion, but the approach to the class being taught.

Sample Presentation

You'll recall that one of the major contentions in the excerpt from Robert Hall's book is that by the time a child enters school he has already learned the structure of his language with the exception of a few "loose ends still to be picked up." Hall is not alone in making this contention; most serious students of language and language learning agree with this. Now how does all of this happen?

(At this point the teacher may wish to ask for ideas from the class, trying to establish the generalization that children learn by imitating the people around them.)

It seems safe to say that children learn language from the people around them: parents (and many experts insist especially mothers), brothers and sisters, playmates, relatives, voices on TV sets and radios, and so on. Children learn language through practice and with a native language the amount of practice is enormous. For example, studies of the amount of language used by preschool children will often offer this sort of information:

1. Two-year-olds use from 4275 to over 10,000 words a day. (Not different words but a total.)

2. Three-year-olds, in one study, averaged nearly 11,500 words a day; four year-olds over 14,000.

3. The longest single period of linguistic inactivity among four-year-olds (during their waking hours) was four minutes.

4. Three-year-olds averaged 376 questions a day; four-year-olds 397 questions a day.

If figures such as these are multiplied by 365 for the days of a year, you will have some understanding of the amount of practice many of us seem to get in the uses of language. Of course, we still haven't worked back to the beginning of all this. Remember how we started this discussion of language learning (of what it means to know a language) with some examples of what you and I are able to do with language. Then we read Hall's excerpt about six-year-olds and then I mentioned some observations of two, three, and four-year-olds.

Language learning begins earlier than age two, however. So now let's start from the beginning and see what may be said of the development of language as the child learns it.

There doesn't seem to be much to say about the language of the youngest of children, but many scholars ask us to observe <u>pre-speech activity</u> in infants. Infants do make noises, and sometimes rather unusual noises. In the process of making these nondescript sounds, vocalization

Sample Presentation Continued

(using the apparatus of speech production) occurs. In other words, a kind of practice is taking place right from the start.

In addition to the miscellaneous random noises which an infant will make, there is communication established as well. Babies cry when they are uncomfortable or displeased (for any number of reasons). They also coo, goo, and smile when they are happy, well-fed, dry, and generally in a state of well-being. Since crying, cooing, or smiling do not meet the criteria we would establish for language, this stage is often called <u>pre-linguistic communication</u>.

NOTE: Emphasize that communication does take place here, although at a pre-linguistic level.

Very young children also begin to establish referent categories (see pages 17 and 18). They may begin to recognize recurrent or enduring objects and actions. A crib toy, for example. Some understanding of space begins to develop; that is, a very young child learns that not everything can be grasped and touched. This kind of recognition is the ground work for talking about the many categories of reference included in mature language.

Somewhat later, but still very early in life, children begin to order their sounds to fit the conventional sounds of our language. The sounds

Sample Presentation Continued

still tend to be babbling, or at least we would call them babbling. The sounds take on some of the characteristics of the native language and this is encouraged by the attention of parents and others.

Along with the babbling of sounds, including speech sounds, children grow in the skills needed to produce the sounds of speech. This aspect of development is the growth of physical, more precisely the motor skills necessary for the production of speech. As you might expect, learning to operate the mouth, tongue, vocal bands and all the other equipment of speech is more than a little complicated.

Young children also must learn to recognize and understand symbolism. Before they produce much speech themselves children understand gestures, tones of voice, and a few words used by people around them. Think, for example, of how early many youngsters seem to understand, but do not always take seriously, the words and tone of voice in "No, no."

Closely related to the recognition of symbolic communication is the beginning of using symbolic communication in the form of words, phrases, and one-word sentences including the intonation patterns of sentences.

Sample Presentation Continued

Another stage in the development of language is the learning of basic patterns of word order. In our language this may involve a seemingly sudden understanding that "I want a _____" is a pattern which can be used to communicate a variety of wants, sometimes to the distress of a parent.

A great deal of linguistic experimentation may follow next. Substitutions of words in basic patterns or variations in phrases and sentences are examples of the kind of experimentation children may do.

Most native speakers of a language reach the point where their ability to vary sentence patterns, substitute words and phrases in established patterns, and to produce novel sentences (those apparently never heard before and therefore not imitated) becomes so skilled that many scholars speak of an intuitive knowledge of grammatical laws. In this way, experts account for the ability of a native speaker of English to recognize an utterance as a sentence even though the utterance is novel and perhaps unusual.

At this point and following it speakers of a language refine and extend their use of patterns. Usually this means the use of more than the basic

Sample Presentation Continued

patterns and a greater versatility in the use of the patterns.

After all of this has been accomplished there comes a rapid growth in vocabulary. The new vocabulary is, in a sense, available for being plugged into the structures of the language. Vocabulary growth is probably the most dramatic and readily observable kind of language development. But in this duscussion of linguistic growth notice that this is listed last. This is quite international, since I'd like to emphasize that there is a great deal more to the development of language than simply learning a large number of words.

NOTE: the teacher may wish to review the stages of development discussed here:

1. engagement in pre-speech activity (movement, vocalization, production of miscellaneous nondescript sounds)

2. use of pre-linguistic communication (crying to signify discomfort of displeasure, cooing and smiling to signify pleasure or state of well-being)

3. cognition of basic referent categories (space, time, casuality, enduring object)

4. acquisition of speech sounds (babbling, production of phonemes)

5. acquisition of motor skills of producing speech sounds

6. acquisition of partial categorical inventory of referents

7. understanding and recognition of certain symbolic gestures, intonations, words and phrases

8. beginnings of symbolic communication (use of words, phrases, one-word sentences, intonation patterns)

9. acquisition of basic patterns of word order (syntax)

10. linguistic experimentation (variations in phrase and sentence structure, substitution of words in basic patterns)

11. acquisition of intuitive knowledge of grammatical laws

12. refinement and extension of sentence patterns (more complexity, greater versatility)

13. rapid growth of vocabulary

Interaction With Others in The Learning of a Language

"Playing the Original Word Game"

This portion of the unit concentrates on the social contexts within which language is learned. The useful term "The Original Word Game" is appropriated from Roger Brown's book Words and Things and is explained in the sample presentation

Sample Introduction

So that we do not lose sight of the part which people play in the learning of language we should emphasize that the stages of language learning are guided and helped along by the persons around the learner. A much more interesting way of discussing this is the way in which the psychologist Roger Brown proceeds. He calls the way in which learners grow and develop through their associations with other people "the Original Word Game."

More precisely what Brown calls "the Original Word Game" are the operations that a learner of language goes through with someone who knows the language. Brown explains that the rules of the game are simple. It requires at least two persons: one learning the language and one teaching and correcting the learner.

(At this point the teacher may ask the class to suggest what kinds of people might serve as the tutor in the Original Word Game. The teacher should guide the discussion so that parents, siblings, playmates, relatives, and so forth are established as potential tutors.)

Suggested Discussion

I'm going to ask you to furnish some examples of the Original Word Game in operation. Think, for example, of how children must learn to esta- the different categories of food in our culture. There is one little girl, now nearly age four, who was enterprising enough to get up by herself in the

Suggested Discussion Continued

morning and fix her own breakfast, consisting of a large bowl of ice cream and a few soda crackers. In ourculture ice cream and soda crackers is not widely accepted as a breakfast menu. Through habit what is accepted as a breakfast menu gets established.

The Original Word Game Continued

The process of naming comes into play here. What we call or what we feel free to call breakfast food must be learned, usually from other people.

The linguistic problems involved in naming things might be more clear if we think of how young children learn to distinguish and to name vehicles which move on the streets

See MPEC Unit 1007

For a time, everything on a street may be car to youngsters, including trucks, buses, fire engines, and bicycles. Then children begin to make distinctions and to attach more specific names--cars are cars, buses are buses, trucks are trucks, and so on. But even these distinctions and these names are not sufficient for most of us today.

Class Activity: Have the class list refinements of names growing out of refined distinctions of motor vehicles. Subcategories of car will be extensive, of course, including makes, models, body styles, modifications, and so forth.

Now, how are such distinctions and names learned? Who is likely to help the learner?

(Those who serve as the tutor in the Original Word Game; parents, peers, so forth.)

How are the referents for the names established?

(In first language Learning, by pointing to examples, often to numerous examples.)

Can you give me additional examples of the Original Word Game being played?

(How do we learn to call dogs <u>dogs</u> instead of <u>cats</u>? How do children learn to call one man <u>Daddy</u> and other men something else? How do children learn that not all drinkable fluids are called <u>juice</u>?)

Can you think of the Word Game being played without examples being used? Without pointing to some thing to help establish the category?

(Anything intangible should serve, anything which uses <u>other words and only other words</u>, metaphors, so forth.)

Summarizing Discussion of the Original Word Game

Establish the generalization that tutors in the Word Game provide models to be imitated by the learner, verify and reinforce the learner's performance, correct the performance, and provide an opportunity for practice

Section One: Language and Interaction With Others
Language Facilitates Social Organization

Sample Introduction

We speak of man as a social being. One of the things we seem to mean by this is that humans belong, ordinarily, to a variety of groups; they have contacts with a variety of other human beings in a variety of contexts. The implications of this kind of an observation are basically the concern of persons in the social sciences, of course. But at this point we're going to make a few observations about how language operates in social contexts with emphasis on how language is used to identify and perpetuate social groups.

I'd like to offer one or two examples of what we're trying toget at here. Then I'll ask you to suggest some additional examples. One of the basic groups to which most of us belong is the family. Many families have special words or phrases, which have a special meaning for them. For example, a fourth child, a baby boy, born into a family was named "John Walter." It so happened that the older children in the family rebelled against the name "John Walter," and decided the boy should be called "Pete." The boy was called Pete throughout his early childhood. This caused him some trouble when he entered school, since he hadn't the slightest idea of who the teacher was looking for when she asked John Walter Moling to identify himself.

Sample Introduction Continued

Nicknames are good examples of how group languages operate. It isn't at all difficult to imagine a boy who is known as Junior by members of his family, by another nickname (Buzz, for example) by his friends, and by his given name (Edward, let's say) by other persons. To extend this, we can think of this person as a mature adult when he may still be called Junior by a few members of his family, Buzz by some of his oldest friends, but Edward by everyone else.

Language operates in quite highly specialized groups as well, of course. An excellent series of examples is in Robert Boyles' book Sport: Mirror of American Life. In his chapter on the Negro baseball players, Boyles quotes Bill White of the St. Louis Cardinals talking about the slang of Negro ballplayers: "Why should I tell you what they mean? Maybe they're secret words. Maybe we've got a code of our own. Ask someone else, not me. I'm not going to tell you." What White is referring to here is a series of terms virtually unknown to ballplayers other than the Negroes in the major leagues.

1. Do you consider yourself a member of some group that has a special language of sorts? A special vocabulary for example?

   (Consider age groups, avocational groups, occupational groups, etc.)

Suggested Discussion

NOTE: The teacher should encourage students to offer examples from their own experience. However, given the nature of many potential examples and the reasons why such language exists, the teacher should not be disappointed if the examples are not numerous. In a sense, this exercise is an intrusion on the student's rather private uses of language.

A generalization to be stressed in the discussion is that special group language both reflects and facilitates formation of group values. Also, that language of a group provides members with a means of identifying themselves as members and of excluding outsiders from the group.

Sample Introduction to Readings on Language and Social Organization (Readings include excerpts by Hayakawa, Huxley, and Sapir. See following pages.)

2. Can you give me some examples of the special language your group uses?

3. Can you spot an outsider, that is, someone not a member of the group you're thinking of, by the way that person uses (or misuses) your special language?

   (This is a question which some students will simply refuse to answer.)

4. Can you think of any examples of when you or someone you know was offended by another person using some special term when you thought the person had no right to use it?

   (The teacher might mention the offense which some persons take at being called by their first name in certain situations. Another graphic, although potentially painful example, would be a teacher who tries unsuccessfully, to use the slang of students.)

The examples which we have just discussed should give us some point of reference now as we move on to a series of statements about language and society. These statements are all rather general and abstract; that is, they are trying to point out the broad implications of the relationship between language and society. For example, the anthropologist and linguist Edward Sapir begins the passage you will read with the statement that""Language is a great force of socialization, probably the greatest which exists."

Important: Emphasize the sweep of the statements assigned for reading.

Procedure: Pass out duplicated statements about language and social organization from the following sources:
1. S.I. Hayakawa, Lanugage in Thought and Action (N.Y.: Harcourt Brace, 1949), pp. 105-106 beginning with "What We Call Society" and ending with "Those Who Fail To Heed Them"
2. Aldous Huxley, "Words and Their Meanings," in The Importance of Language, Ed. Max Black (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), beginning with the words "Human Behavior as We Know It" and ending with "To persevere in This Way."
3. Edward Sapir, Culture, Lanugage and Personality (Los Angeles, Univ. of Calif. Press, 1962), Beginning with the words "Language is a great force of socialization" and ending with "Verbal substitutes for the physical world." (pp. 15-18.)

This quotation is a good example of the level of abstraction at which these readings operate. The term socialization, to some social scientists, might be taken to mean all of the experiences by which a human being learns his places within a social system. This covers a lot of territory, as I think you'll agree.

One basic problen in reading these selections, then, will be to try to identify the breadth of the statements and then to evaluate them.

Before you begin to read look over the questions I'll place on the chalkboard. Keep them in mind as you read. Make notes on those parts of the statements which apply to one or more of the questions.

1. Do the three authors seem to agree on the general significance of language? Why? Why not?

   (Yes. Hayakawa - "Society is a vast network of mutual agreements and they are based on language." Huxley - "Human behavior became possible only with the establishment of a language." Sapir - "Language is a great force of socialization, probably the greatest that exists." All agree that language is the crux of society.)

2. Hayakawa refers to "directive language." What do you think he means by this? Can you supply examples?

   (Directive language is control exercised by verbs, tells people what to do, e.g. school clothes, rules.)

3. Does Huxley also emphasize directive language?

   (Not directly. He implies that directive language is necessary for inter-personal relationships.)

Study Questions for Use With Readings

Write Questions on Chalkboard

The teacher should supply additional questions as appropriate.

The questions and any additional comments may be used as a guide for discussing the excerpts.

Questions Continued

4. To what groups does Sapir refer to support his statements? Can you add examples?

   (family, the undergraduates of a college, a labor union, the underworld in a large city, the members of a club, a group of four or five friends who hold together through life in spite of differences of professional interest.)

5. Could any or all of these statements be used to support the argument that "world conflict could be eliminated if men could only communicate"? Why or why not?

   (Authors seem to imply that this could be the answer, e.g. "Directives about matters which society as a whole regards as essential to its own safety are made especially powerful, so that no individual in that society will fail to be impressed with a sense of his obligations.")

Writing or Speaking Assignments:

As considered appropriate, students may be assigned writing or speaking assignments on aspects of the following general topics:

1. The role of language in groups of which the student is a member (family, the classroom, school or non-school organizations, social groups, occupational groups, etc.)

2. A discussion or a glossary of terms with significant overtones for a particular group or sub-group.

3. Identification and explanation of situations which illustrate that sometimes "it is not what is said that matters so much as that something is said."

SECTION TWO: LANGUAGE AS A REFLECTION OF CULTURE

NOTE TO TEACHER: The relationships which exist between a culture and that language of that culture are undoubtedly important. Exactly what the relationships are and how best to describe them are, at best, unsettled matters. At leat three general theories seem to exist:

1. the shape of the culture determines the shape of the language
2. the shape of the language determines the shape of the culture
3. culture and language have a reciprocal relationship

In this unit, point number three is taken as the most satisfactory statement. That is, culture and language are inter-related, neither being a perfect predictor of the other.

Sample Introduction

NOTE: A combination of lecture and discussion approach is suggested here.

We often use language to describe things we see. For example, what are the colors of the rainbow?

(It makes little difference what the students offer as answers. Keep account of the answers by writing them on the chalkboard. Hopefully, more than one answer will be suggested.)

One standard division of the colors we perceive is into six parts: purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. Does anyone know how to subdivide this arrangement into the so-called primary and secondary colors?

There are several possible schemes for naming the colors we perceive. From the point of view of language, we've had several sets of names suggested for essentially the same phenomenon. Still most of us would accept the division into six parts as being acceptable, at least most speakers of the Indo-European languages would.

Language as a Reflection of Culture Continued

Let's look at how another language in another culture would make the division. Shona, a language of Rhodesia, makes the division like this:

Place comparative names on chalkboard.

cipswuka - citema - cicena - cipswuka

compared with the English

purple - blue - green - yellow - orange - red.

A speaker of Shona, in other words, divides colors into three parts (the name for purple and red are the same).

Bassa, a language of Liberia, divides the spectrum into two parts:

Add the Bassa names to those already on the chalkboard.

hui and ziza.

The ways in which speakers of various languages structure the colors which they see and distinguish is a good example of differences between cultures and between languages. There could be a tendency for speakers of English to believe that because they name <u>more</u> colors that English is the superior language. Do you think this is so?

(Students should be encouraged to remember the division into the so-called "warm" and "cool" colors which serves well in some situations, the division into primary and secondary which serves well in other situations.)

May be omitted for less-able students

For the sake of being able to speak conveniently about the observations we make in different situations, then, we use different words or combinations of words. As a final example of this business of

Distribute examples of the Ph scale (see page 38 A)

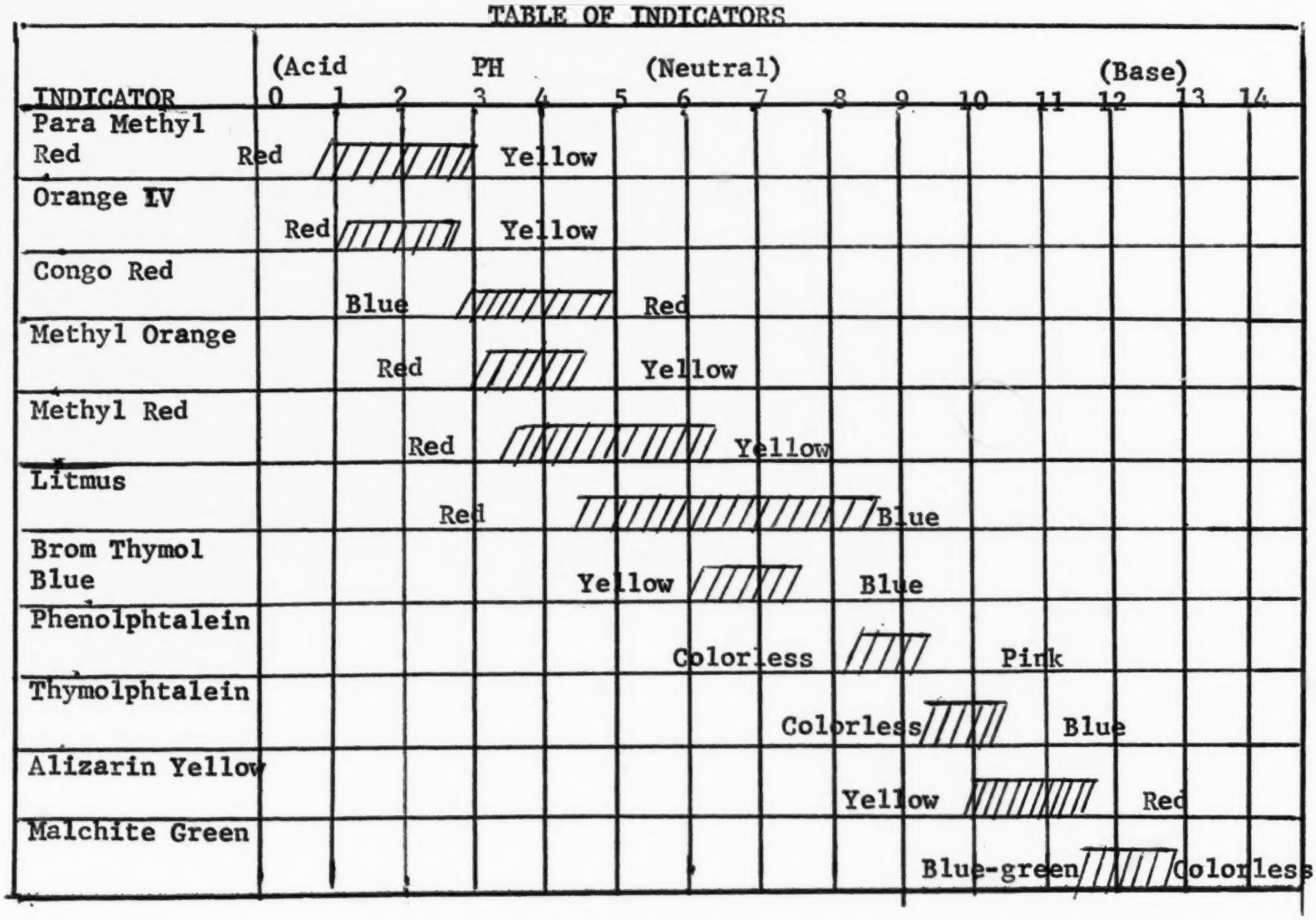
Language as a Reflection of Culture Continued

the colors we might mention the rather special situation of a chemistry lab. The colors of indicator solutions can be described according to the concentration of hydrogen ions. Roughly, this means that the colors are classified as they correspond to the degree of acidity of the indicator solution. This scale makes it possible to express in numerical terms some of the finer distinctions we may otherwise overlook. Seven on the Ph scale indicates a neutral solution, lower numbers indicate more acid solutions, and higher numbers indicate base solutions. Litmus, for example, shows increasing redness the more acid the solution, shows blueness the more base the solution.

At just what point we stop calling a color orange and begin calling it red is difficult for us to decide sometimes. Approximately the same problem is presented when we try to decide at what height someone is to be called "tall" instead of "average."

(The teacher may wish to discuss with the class some of the other numerous reference categories which present the same sort of problem. The conclusion may be sought that these are problems of describing continous things in discrete terms; The students may phrase this closer to "these are matters of degree not of kind.")

TABLE OF INDICATORS



Language as a Reflection of Culture Continued

Most of the examples we've used so far are from within our own culture. Other examples, sometimes more extreme, come to light when one culture is compared with another. Most information of this sort comes to us from anthropologists who, in the course of making their observations about another culture, must pay attention to the language they meet. As you might guess, it is no accident that many of the best-known linguists in the world have been anthropologists.

Sample Introduction

(The teacher may prefer to use the excerpts separately or to use only one one or two of them.)

The selection you are going to read now is presented from what we may call an anthropological point of view. That is, the interest lies in what the examination of a language can tell us about the culture in which that language is used. As you read you will see some scholars thing that a great deal can be learned about a culture through the examination of language. The selection, by Edward Sapir, the concern is with how language is used to gather and to transmit the ways of life in a culture.

Distribute copies of the paragraph on pp. 18-19 of Sapir's Culture, Language, and Personality which begins, "The use of language in cultural accumulation"

Study questions to be used with readings. May also be used as a guide for class or group discussion.

1. What examples does Sapir offer as illustrations of how language helps preserve a culture?

   (Culture-preserving instruments include: proverbs, medicine formulae, standardized prayers, folk tales, standardized speeches, song texts, genealogies.)

2. What do you think is meant when Sapir writes of a culture being "word bound"?

   (He means that a culture relies solely on past written authority. Such a culture does not experiment, but takes the word of others.)

Suggested writing or speaking assignment for students:

Identify proverbs and standardized sayings that are typical of your culture. Explain why you think the proverbs and/or sayings are typical of your culture.

SECTION THREE: LANGUAGE AND REALITY

NOTE: The concept stressed in this portion of the unit is that the portion of reality we see affects our language and, in turn, our language is a guide to how we see reality. Much of what precedes this portion of the unit hints at this concept. At this point the concept is treated more directly.

Sample Introduction

Write the quotation from Herschberger on the chalkboard.

Josie the Chimpanzee said, "No matter what names you humans give to things, we chimpanzees go right on enjoying life. It isn't so with humans. . . The names you uncaged primates give things affect your attitude toward them forever after. You lose your insight because you are always holding up a screen of language between you and the real world."

It is a commonplace but nonetheless very important observation that people have trouble communicating with each other. You often hear people say, "I know what I mean but I can't think of how to express myself." There is another facet of the problem which this sort of comment suggests: people may have trouble communicating with themselves. This situation is suggested by the words "holding up a screen of language between you and the real world."

Suggested Discussion

Let's turn our attention to what may be implied by this phrase "holding up a screen of language."

1. We very often confuse <u>things</u> with the <u>words we use to name things</u>. Some of the best examples of equating the word and the thing simply cannot be used in the classroom. Terms of prejudice and obscenity, for example, may be con-

Sample Discussion Continued

sidered so objectionable that we hear them only in very special situations. What is really so objectionable is what the word refers to, not the word as a word. But there are some we might bring up here. Think, for example, of the general purpose use which some persons make of words such as Commie, liveral, reactionary, Fascist, or tyrant.

(Students may have additional examples of loaded terms.)

2. The emotionally-charged or loaded terms are examples of how the words we use may operate as "a screen of language." Too often such terms make if difficult for us to make an accurate judgment of people around us. Later in the unit we'll examine the problem of stereotypes more closely, but some mention of stereotyping might help us here too. For example, a few years ago it was rather common in the state of Minnesota for families of Norwegian ancestry to consider it unthinkable for them to marry someone of Swedish ancestry. The Swedes felt about the same way about Norwegians. Often, merely having a name typical of one or the other of these nationality groups was sufficient reason for an individual to be disliked and mistrusted. Indeed, many of today think of the treatment of persons with German-sounding names which took place in this country around the time of World War I as one of the saddest things in American history. From one point of view, what happened during this era was a confusion of a person's name with what that person believed, stood for, or was willing to do. What other examples of stereotying can you think of?

3. Have any of you taken a course in a foreign language? If so, can you provide examples of phrases or terms which seem to illustrate a different point of view toward some part of life?

(Translations of admonitions to misbehaving children are illustrative: American mothers say "Be good." French mothers say "Be wise." Swedish mothers say "Be kind." German mothers say "Get back in line." A good discussion should introduce the question of whether such translations are accurate; that is, would

Americans and Frenchmen have the same understanding of "good" or "wise"? "I feel like a million dollars" expresses our concern for material wealth.)

Using "Country of the Blind" by H.G. Wells

Sample Introduction

As an example of how what we see affects what we talk and write about, read a short story by H.G. Wells called "Country of the Blind." Actually you'll be reading about the last two-thirds of the story, the part which is of most interest to us in this unit. In the first part of the story Wells tells of a legendary valley in the Andes. It is a pleasant, fertile spot in which none of the residents need worry about their day to day needs. The strange aspect of the valley is that fourteen generations of inhabitants have been born blind. Into this valley, quite by accident comes Nunez. As the only person in the valley who can see, he assumes that he will be able to impress and eventually rule the inhabitants of the valley. The portion of the story which you will read begins at the point where Nunez has been discovered by the inhabitants of the valley.

NOTE: If your students have studied Unit 1006: Learning Our Language, they may have already read this story.

Distribute copies of story.

As you read, keep these points in mind:

1. What do the blind people recognize as important and enduring? How are these things related to their blindness?

   (Things that can be felt and touched)

2. How do blind people react to Nunez' descriptions of what he sees?

   (They think he is lying or crazy.)

Additional questions and comments may be provided by the teacher. These points may be used as a guide for class discussion and/or as points to be included on a test.

Questions Continued

3. How do they interpret Nunez' use of the words see, seeing and sight?

   (They think that his senses are still imperfect and that he talks nonsense words.)

4. How do the blind people react to Nunez as a person? What ironic twist is involved here?

   (They think he is not perfectly formed yet. They consider him to be blind and unaware of what life is like.)

5. In what ways may this story serve as an example of how what we see and perceive in other ways affects our language?

   (Because the people of the valley did not understand the meaning of the word sight, this was not a part of their language.)

6. How does the author account for the ability of the blind to exist and flourish in their valley?

   (Other senses developed more fully, i.e. hearing, sense of touch. The blind in the valley ordered their world to fit their needs--paths in straight lines, etc.)

Using the Whorf and Ember statements on Language and Reality (see following pages.)

Sample Introduction

The short story by H.G. Wells is an imaginative account of what things might be like in a society of blind persons. Look at two other statements on the connection between language and what we see or observe. Each of the statements is somewhat speculative; that is, each statement refers to an imagined situation or situations, supposedly illustrating the connections we're interested in right now. For example, the first statement begins with the situation of a race of people who had the defect of being able to see only the color blue. Actually, this situation is not too much different from the one Wells created for his short story. As you read, keep the Wells short story in mind and decide is Whorf's essay is illustrating the same thing.

NOTE: The teacher may wish to develop a written assignment based on a comparison of the short story by Wells and the statement by Whorf.

If you have read Orwell's novel 1984, the second statement may be of special interest to you, since it uses a passage from 1984 to illustrate one of the main points. For purposes of this unit think back to the novel, and consider the part which language and the manipulation of language plays in shaping the conformist society which Orwell attacks in 1984. The statement is referring to how ideas and beliefs may be shaped and sometimes twisted out of shape through manipulation of language.

Distribute copies of the section from Whorf's Language, Thought, and Reality which begins "if a race of people" and ends "can in some way be celebrated."

Study and discussion questions for use with the Whorf excerpt.

Write questions on the chalkboard.

1. What do you think is meant by the statement that "real scientists have their eyes primarily on background phenomena"? Is this illustrated?

   (Background phenomena talks about the law of gravitation as a rule without exception and yet one that cuts little ice in our everyday lives. Yes, this is illustrated with the discussion of people who can only see blue.)

2. Whorf writes that "We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages." What does this do to the idea of impartial, objective analysis of what we observe?

   (Impartial, objective analysis is impossible.)

Suggested Writing Assignment

Sample Presentation

Many of us are annoyed by what we call "splitting hairs" or "making unnecessary distinctions" or "quibbling over terms." Our annoyance is justified if we can show that it is merely the word or the term that is causing theproblem. If, however, an important and useful distinction is being attempted through careful choice of words, our annoyance is not justified. Being human, much of the time when another person uses a special word or phrase, he is quibbling; when we use a special word or phrase, it is because an important distinction is being made.

For example, I may walk into a paint store and ask the clerk for some wall paint. The clerk, usually politely but sometimes gruffly, may start making distinctions, distinctions which are reflected

Sample Presentation Continued

in the words he uses. He may ask if I want oil base or water base; casein or latex; flat, semigloss, or glossy. Quibbling? Some of us might unwittingly jump to that conclusion. The distinctions are important in selecting the right kind of paint to use under different circumstances.

Suggested Writing Assignment

(Using essentially the same circumstances-- a person making some sort of purchase--discuss additional examples of distinctions. For example, a woman walks into a gas station and announces she wants to buy a set of tires. Better yet, the woman announces that her car won't run. Other possibilities are persons buying cotton material for sewing, a cut of beef roast, a jazz recording as a gift for a friend who likes jazz, or a woman buying a tie for a man.)

Think of an example of distinctions such as these we've discussed. Explain the circumstances under which using one word or phrase in preference to another is desirable or essential rather than merely quibbling. The emphasis should be on showing why the distinction is really important. You'll do your best work if you think of some term in an area of real interest to you--a job, one of your favorite recreations, a strong interest of some sort.

(The teacher should make specific suggestions suitable to the interests of the students in the class.)

SECTION FOUR: REVIEW OF THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

NOTE: For additional information and a more detailed treatment of communication models see MPEC 1001R and other tenth grade units. The major considerations of the unit include:

a. Feedback (the circular response of speaker and listener).
b. The concept of shared meaning. (The symbols produced by a speaker stir up meanings for the listener somewhat different from those stirred up for the speaker. Establishing an area of shared meaning is essential to communication.)

Sample Introduction

Think back to the example of the man buying wall paint.

(The teacher may prefer to use one or more of the student papers to illustrate the same point.)

The man buying paint, undoubtedly inexperienced in painting, thought that paint was paint. The paint seller made distinctions which the buyer did not make. A way of summarizing this situation is to say that the paint buyer and the paint seller did not share a meaning of the term "wall paint."

Using Diagrams (see following pages)

Distribute sheets.

As a way of representing this idea of shared meaning, look at the simple diagrams on this sheet. If we think of the whole circle as representing the wides possible meaning of a word, then we could let the samller area A, B, C represent the meaning our hypothetical buyer would attach to the term "wall paint." As you can see from the relatively small area used, the buyer hasn't had much experience with wall paint. The larger area used to represent

Sample Introduction Continued Using Diagram of Communication Process

the experience of the paint seller is supposed to represent greater experience. If you can imagine the circle representing the buyer's area of meaning being superimposed over the circle representing the seller's experience, we would have an area where the two areas of meaning overlap. This we could call the area of shared meaning. In most cases, this area would represent what gets communicated.

Still thinking about our hypothetical situation of the man buying paint, the relatively small area of shared meaning does not mean that no communication can take place; it should suggest, though, that little communication will take place until the buyer or the seller (or both) work at establishing an area of shared meaning.

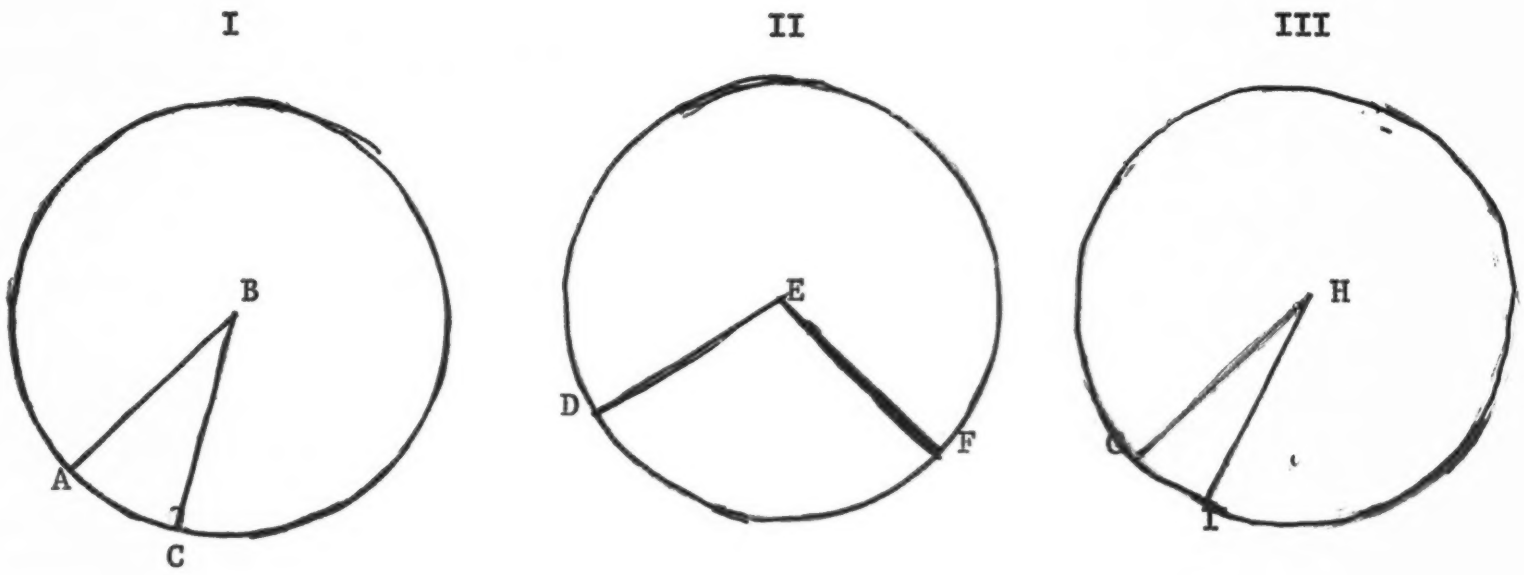
(Discuss with the students how this may be accomplished. The buyer may explain his lack of experience with wall paint. The seller may explain the advantages and disadvantages of the various types of wall paints he stocks.)

Now look at the portion marked B on the sheet I gave you. This is an attempt to generalize from the sort of situation we saw in portion A above. In B we're not thinking of any specific word or term. Instead the circle is supposed to represent the widest possible meaning of any word, term, or phrase. What is being diagramed in these three circles, then?

(Hopefully the students will recognize that these circles represent the notion of shared meaning in a more generalized way.)

To be examined and
discussed by students

A.

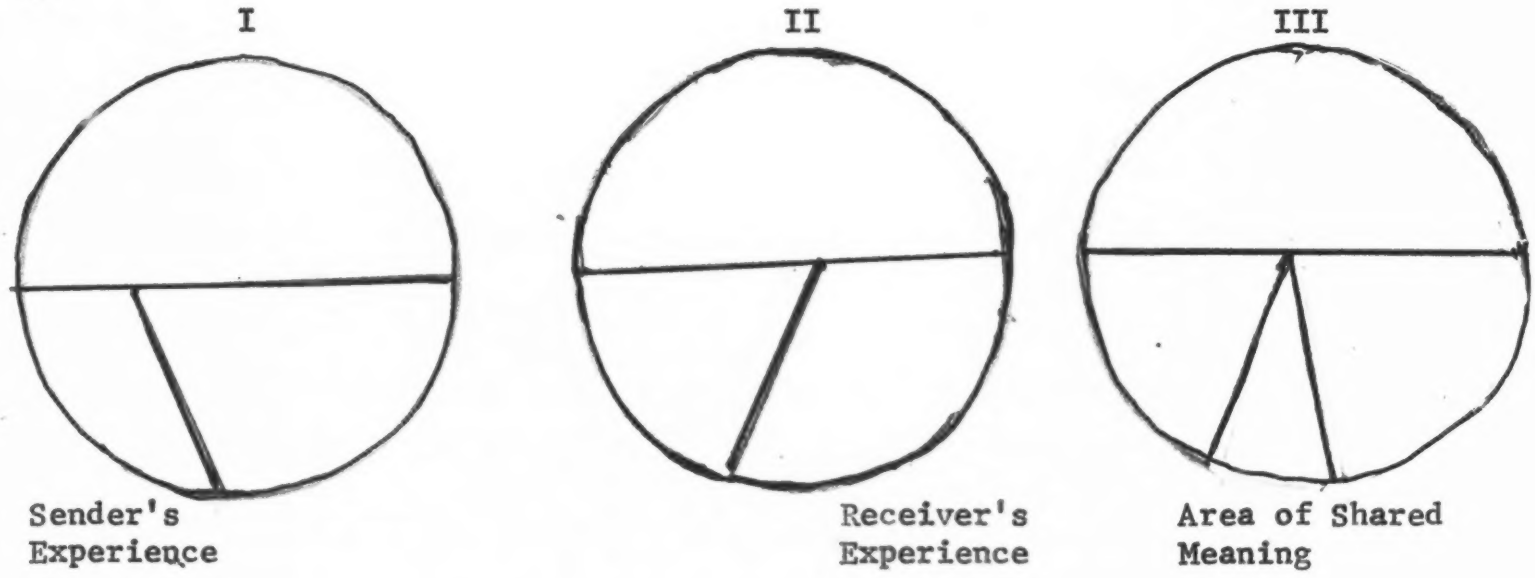


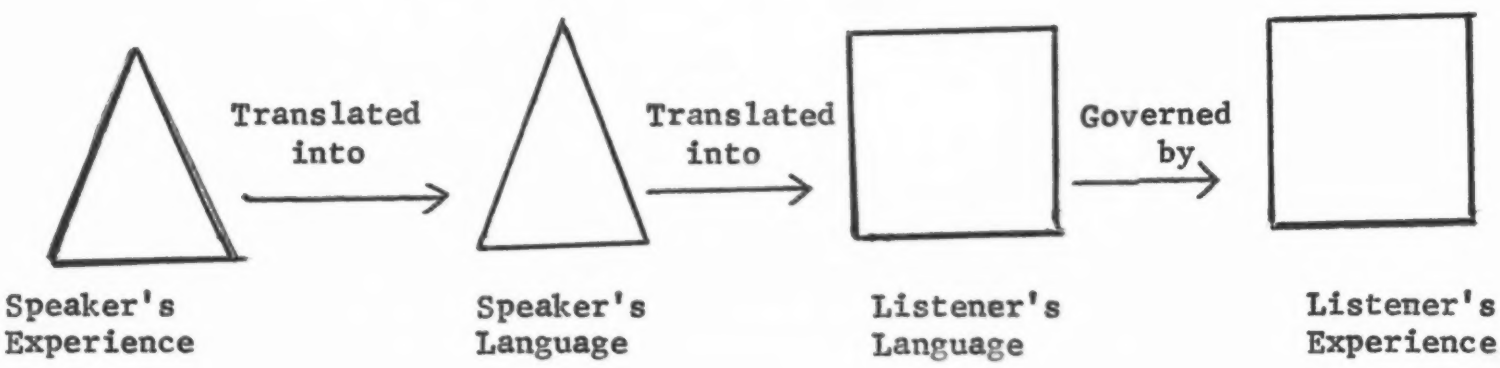
In Circle I - Area A, B, C = buyer's experience with wall paint

In Circle II - Area D, E, F = seller's experience with wall paint

In Circle III - Area G, H, I = area of shared meaning buyer and seller

B.





Sample Introduction Continued using Diagram of Communication Process

Another way of visualizing part of the process of communication is shown in Part C of the hand-out. Notice that in this diagram the word translated is used to explain how the speaker converts his experience into language. (Students who have gone through earlier units in the MPEC series may recall the term "encode" as used to name this portion of the process.) The listener receives the language, usually converts into his own language, and the listener's language is governed by his experiences. (Again, some students may recall the term "decode.")

Additional Discussion Questions

1. According to your own experience, do these diagrams support the statement, "It is impossible to communicate an idea or experience exactly. Something is always lost in the translation"?

2. How might these diagrams help us understand the problems of communicating with a large and diverse audience?

3. How can a speaker or listener help each other establish an area of shared meaning? (Making use of the phenomenon of feedback. The speaker's behavior affects the listener's and vice versa.)

The Functions of Communication

NOTE: This is intended as a brief review of the functions of communication. Teachers who wish to treat these in more detail should see MPEC Unit 1002R.

Sample Presentation

Before we can go on to consider some additional reasons for our failure to communicate I think we should keep in mind some of the ways in which we use language and have it used on us. Have any of you ever heard or read an explanation of the purposes of communication or the functions of language? What are some of the general reasons for which we use language?

(Probably the most common explanations, which students may have encountered in a speech or English class, include to inform, convince, persuade, establish rapport, and evoke. An alternative set of terms would be sharing information, influencing belief and action, engaging in acts of inquiry and discovery, sharing experience, and relieving social tension.)

Suggested Questions for Class Discussion or Student Assignments

1. Given the variety of functions of communication, how would you react to the adage "Silence is golden"?

   (Answers will vary. Students should see that language is needed.)

2. What are some of the things which might happen if we as a class agreed not to use spoken language nor written language from the time we leave school this afternoon until we turn tomorrow morning? Is anyone willing to try this? (This could be an excellent exercise to demonstrate the importance of phatic language, language used to establish human contact and to relieve social tension.)

   (Each person's experience will be a little different. Area of shared meaning would vary.)

3. Read the following statement to the students and discuss the functions of communication as explained here:

> "Each verbal statement by a human being has the aim and function of expressing some thought or feeling actual at that moment and in that situation, and necessary for some reason or other to be made known to another person or persons--in order either to serve purposes of common action, or to establish the ties of purely social communion, or else to delivery the speaker of violent feelings or passions. The attainment of concepts, the production and use of symbols and interpersonal relationship demanded by the communicative situation are co-existing activities. Each requires the other."
>
> (Some students may be anzious to discuss the uses of language "to deliver the speaker of violent feelings or passions.")

So far throughout this unit there have been numerous hints at failure to understand one another as a major point. This included in a unit on the social and psychological importance of language since many human problems are caused and/or compounded by failure to understand the other man's language. Now we're going to look at some of the reasons why we misunderstand, at some of the barriers to communication.

Distribute copies of the essay "Barriers to Communicate Between Men" by F.J. Roethlisberger, in Hayakawa's Use and Misuse of Language, pp.41-46.

To begin with, you'll be reading an essay entitled "Barriers to Communication Between Men." Notice that early in the essay, the very first sentence in fact, the author says ". . . it seems to me extraordinary that any two persons can ever understand each other." You might keep this conclusion in mind as we examine barriers to communication.

NOTE: The written assignment suggested in the paragraph to the right may be given to selected students only if the teacher prefers.

Up to now in the unit I've provided study questions for most of the things you've been asked to read. This time you provide the questions. As you read it the first time, write down any questions which occur to you and hand them to me. I'll write them on the chalkboard. Then the entire class can use the questions as a guide for the second reading of the essay.

Using the Roethlisberger Essay Continued

NOTE: The teacher should examine the questions suggested by the students and check whether basic points such as the following are included:

1. The author's citations of differences in background, expereince, motiviation, value systems, and assumptions as barriers.
2. The conflicting conceptions of communication as an explanation for misunderstanding.
3. The different strategies which evolve from the different conceptions of communication.
4. The simplifications inherent in the examples, as pointed out by the author.
5. The four hypotheses with which the author concludes his essay. Of special interest are his comments about schooling.
6. Questions to encourage students to point out parallel situations in their own experience.

In the course of class discussion the teacher may wish to point out additional barriers to communication such as these:

1. The tendency of listeners to reject (forget or distort) information contrary to their bias.
2. Situations in which speaker and listener have learned language in markedly different sub-cultures.
3. The tendency to over-interpret messages from status superiors and under-interpret messages from status inferiors.
4. The habits of concealment in speakers.
5. The confusion of facts and inferences from facts.
6. The tendency to apply qn over-simplified two-value orientation system to events (consistent use of black and white, either-or orientation).
7. Treating a <u>contingent</u> criterion of a word and its referent as a <u>necessary</u> attribute of a word and its referent (holding that fluorine is a poison in one quantity means that fluorine is a poison in any quantity).

Supplementary assignments and exercises. To be selected and modified by the teacher.

1. To show how words may vary depending on context, including situation, ask students to use the following words in as many different ways as possible. table, chair, back, free, run

2. Explain a situation in which someone's failure to listen to you caused serious problems in communication. (Or vice versa.)

3. Explain how you would tell a foreign exchange student about some term which has a unique set of meanings in America. For example, free catch, squeeze play, bandwagon, or freedom rider.

4. Selct a newspaper or magazine article which appears to be exclusively or largely informative in purpose. Explain under what conditions the article might also be considered persuasive or evocative as well.

5. Examine the following list of descriptive words. Select two of the words and explain under what circumstances and for what reasons you would use each of the words to describe another person. For example, you may decide to contrast the circumstances and reasons for selecting shy with the circumstances and reasons for selecting reserved.

   a. shy, reticent, reserved, uncommunicative
   b. skinny, lean, wiry, slim
   c. belligerent, out-spoken, aggressive, assertive
   d. mechanical, systematic, analytical, precise
   e. plot, scheme, organize, plan

6. Describe a situation in which a given word may have positive or neutral connotations for one person or group of persons and negative connotations for another person or group of persons. For example, the word commitment may have positive connotations for a person who thinks of it as meaning dedication, negative connotations for a person who thinks of it as meaning being sentenced (committed) to a correctional institution.

SECTION FIVE: INFERENCES BASED ON LANGUAGE

NOTE: This portion of the unit begins with the assertion that people do make inferences and draw conclusions about other people partially on the basis of language. This is, of course, nothing new to students and teachers. What may be new to some students, however, is the direct examination of this tendency in human beings which should lead to some tentative decisions about the validity of such inferences.

Generalizations in this portion of the unit include the following:

1. People do draw inferences based on language.
2. An individual's language is one of the indicators of his social affiliations.
3. Language is a major source of evidence upon which others judge our intentions, abilities, and temperament.

Sample Introduction and Discussion

I suspect that each of us in this room has, at one time or another, been hauled up short for some particular way in which we used our language. When we were younger and in the first stages of learning language we had out tutors. Do you remember the Original Word Game? Our parents may have corrected us or cautioned us about some particular usage. Teachers, especially English teachers in many cases, may have done much the same thing.

(Ask the students to provide examples of usages about which they have been cautioned or for which they have been penalized.)

Eventually rather basic questions come to most of us as a result of such experiences: Why? Why not say this? Why say that? What difference does it make? Sometimes we never ask the questions out loud nor ask the questions of the person who has corrected us--yet the questions do come to us.

Inferences Based on Language Continued

Have you ever asked the questions? If so, have you ever received an answer? What kinds of answers have you received?

(Place key phrases of the different responses on the chalkboard.)

NOTE: Among the types of explanations the teacher should expect are:

1. "There is no such word."
2. "That is not a polite word."
3. "Careful speakers do not use that."
4. "That's the wrong word."
5. "That isn't a good word in this context."
6. "Don't say that because I said so."

Sample Introduction and Discussion Continued

More than once, speakers have been offended when someone "corrects" them. This may have happened to you sometime. Which of the different explanations would you think of as potentially offensive to some persons? Why? Under what conditions?

(The goal at this point is not to examine the validity of the reasons offered when "correcting" another speaker, but to establish the generalization that persons do seem to be making inferences about others on the basis of language usage.)

By this point in the unit I hope that you have good reason to accept the idea that our language is very much a part of us. Our language tends to be personal in a very real sense. When someone else makes a negative comment about how we use our language we often take this as a negative comment about our intelligence or personal worth. We should point out that not all the negative comments

Sample Introduction and Discussion Continued

about language are consciously intended as critical of intelligence or personality, but we still may receive them this way. In other words, the language we use is used by others as part of the evidence by which they judge our intentions, our abilities, and our temperament.

So others do make inferences about us on the grounds of how we use language. Although these are by no means the only grounds on which we are judged, the uses of language are important in the formation of judgment, as these statements will suggest:

> Voltaire: men. . ."n'emploient les paroles que pour deguiser leurs pensees." (Men use words only to disguise their thoughts.)
>
> Goldsmith: "The true use of speech is not so much to express our thoughts as to conceal them."
>
> Kierkegaard: ". . . people use language not merely to conceal their thoughts,. . . but to conceal the fact that they have no thoughts."

Sample Introduction

You may have noticed that some of the ways in which persons justify their comments about the way others use language suggest that they think of language as a kind of badge of education or social standing.

Inferences and Usage

NOTE: The amount of time and the detail devoted to this portion of the unit will vary according to the class's familiarity with various doctrines of English usage. For a class unfamiliar with points of view toward usage, teachers should refer to MPEC Units 802, 902, 1003, and 1101 for additional materials, information, and examples.

Given the variety of purposes for which language is used, it should not be surprising that there are variations in the ways we use it. The language we use is subject to pressures of all sorts, including those which a linguist would call "non-linguistic." Dr. Harold Allen, a linguist at the University of Minnesota, describes the non-linguistic factors as those things which go on outside of the grammar and sounds of the language--the personality of the person who is speaking or writing, the reasons for which language is being used, the audience being addressed, and the time, place, and occasion in which language is being produced. The study of the relationships between the non-linguistic factors and the forms of language is called the study of usage.

Important: Students should note that the study of usage involves an analysis of the choices available within a language as related to non-linguistic factors.

There have been numerous attempts to explain the usages of American English. One kind of attempt insists that usage is a matter of correct versus incorrect. If it were entirely workable this would

Inferences and Usage Continued

be the easiest explanation to deal with. But it doesn't seem to be entirely workable, since it ignores the cases in which a word or phrase may be acceptable and effective in one situation but not in another situation.

Because of the problems involved in labeling matters of usage once and for all as correct or incorrect, other schemes of discussing usage have been devised. One you are familiar with, most likely, is the "level of usage" approach. This one uses terms such as <u>standard</u>, <u>sub-standard</u>, <u>colloquial</u>, <u>slang</u> and so forth. A variation of this approach uses the terms <u>formal</u>, <u>informal</u>, <u>colloquial</u>, <u>vulgar</u> and so on.

(Discuss with the students any experience that they may have had with such terms. Introduce the question of determining what is standard.)

As you can see, the idea of levels of usage sets up more categories than simply <u>correct</u> and <u>incorrect</u>. In this sense, speaking of levels of usage, then, is a bit more complicated than speaking of whether a usage is "correct."

But even the idea of levels of usage is rather narrow, at least according to most serious students of language usage. More precise plans have been put into operation, plans which attempt to set up a framework with which the major variations of

Inferences and Usage Continued

language usage can be described and discussed. One such plan sets up five general points to be considered in discussing differences in usage:

1. the range between speaking and writing
2. the range between informal and formal
3. the range between standard and non-standard
4. the range between "here" and "there" (geographical factors)
5. the range between "now" and "then" (differences which occur with the passage of time)

Distribute representations of usage scheme. (see following pages)

As a way of visualizing how this scheme operates let's look at the figures on this sheet. First of all, think of each of the five factors (above) as being represented by points along a line. This is what we have in figure one. Just a line, representing the gradations, the relatively small differences we might find at any moment, between spoken and written usage. This is to say, there are differences in the words and forms we use when we speak and when we write. But we do not really use two completely different systems; there isn't exactly a written language separate and distinct in every detail from the spoken language. That's why we use the line to represent the differences rather than setting up two absolutely separate categories. The differences, on other words, are thought of as point along a continuum ranging from speech to writing.

Inferences and Usage Continued

In the same fashion we can represent the gradations of usage from the most formal to the most informal by adding the lines you see in figure two. By adding the lines to give us the dimension of height, we can provide a way of illustrating degrees of formality to go along with the differences between speech and writing. With this kind of an arrangement we can visualize how we might speak of informal writing as somewhat different from informal speech, and speak of gradations fo informal writing to formal writing and so on.

By adding lines to represent the dimension of depth and letting these stand for degrees of standardness, largely depending on the educational background and social prestige of the user, we can come up with a figure such as the one labeled #3. What we have now is a three-dimensional figure to represent three of the general ways in which language usage varies. This provides a way of visualizing how we speak of formal spoken standard usage or informal written standard usage and so on.

Of course, this representation uses the three dimensions of a cube and we don't have any dimensions left to represent the remaining two general factors I mentioned earlier. Now we'll have to imagine that we can move this cube around.

Inferences and Usage Continued

For example, suppose I walk to this side of the room, taking the cube along with me. I can let the location of the cube with the room represent the geographical differences which we can find in usage. In other words, what is appropriate as formal spoken usage here may be somewhat different from what is formal spoken usage (the teacher walks to a different spot in the room) over here.

As a way of representing the fifth factor--the changes in usage which take place with the passage of time--we might try to visualize this cube changing slightly in size although still remaining a cube.

Putting all this visualization together, then, this is what we get: Any given usage can be thought of as placed somewhere <u>inside</u> this cube, depending upon what observations we can make concerning how formal or informal the situation in which the usage appears, how standard a user of the language produces the usage, and whether the usage is spoken or written. Then we think of the location and the size of the cube itself. We are, then making observations and judgments about five different but very much inter-related factors in usage.

Summary Discussion or Exercise:

How could we construct a figure to represent the view of usage that separates as correct or incorrect? A figure to represent levels of usage identified as formal, informal, colloquial, and vulgar?

What are the differences among these views of usage?

NOTE: At this point in the unit some teachers may wish to assign additional work on doctrines of usage. A useful source of examples of different points of view is the case book on the dispute over the Third International Dictionary, Dictionaries and That Dictionary edited by Sledd and Ebbitt.

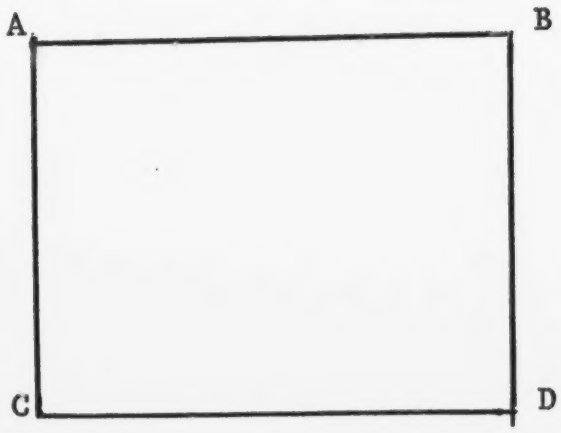
To be used by students during lecture and discussion

I.

A ⟷ B = Speech ⟷ Writing

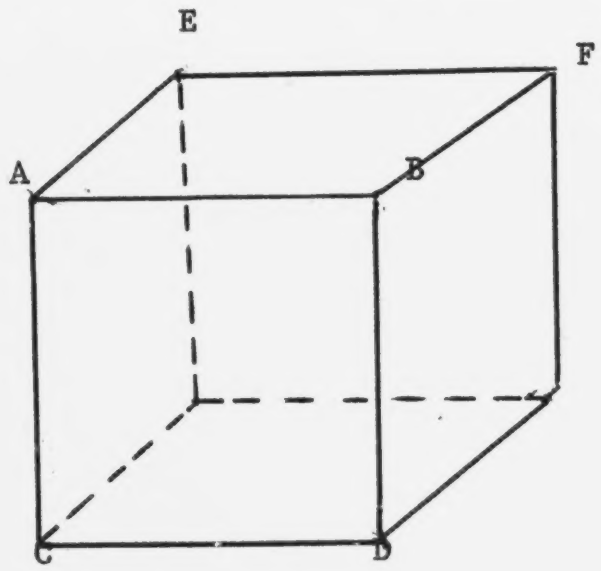
A ⟷ B

II.



A ⟷ C = Formal ⟷ Informal
(or)
B ⟷ D

III.



A ⟷ E = Standard ⟷ Non-Standard

Sample Introduction

Distribute copies of or selections from Joos' The Five Clocks, International Journal of American Linguistics, April, 1962, Part V.

Another approach to discussing usage is contained in the series of excerpts from a monograph with the rather curious title The Five Clocks. I think you'll see the point of the title when you read the first two sentences of the reading. Notice how the author keeps his analogy going throughout the essay. In fact, you might give some thought to whether the analogy is a good one.

Notice that the author speaks of styles of language, five of them in fact. Concentrate on identifying what the statements put forth as the five styles. Finally, if any examples of any of the styles occur to you, write them down or keep them in mind.

NOTE: With some classes the teacher may wish to ask students to write out examples in two or more of Joos's styles. This would, of course, follow reading the excerpts.

NOTE TO TEACHER

SUMMARY:

Review the main ideas discussed under the concept "usage" and the different classifications of usage which have been discussed: traditional, Allen;s five dimensions, and Joos' five clocks.

The teacher may also want to discuss with the students how they can master their own usage needs:

1. Listen carefully to language as it is spoken and note the situation, speaker, etc.

2. Observe the written language, author, intent, etc.

3. Use textbooks and dictionaries as guides, not as the "last word" or the "ultimate authority."

SECTION SIX: INFERENCES ABOUT PEOPLE BASED ON DIALECT

CONCEPTS:

1. Linguistic differences create and are created by dimensions of social distance.
2. Language is used as a means of group identification.
3. Language is used as a means of excluding non-group members (barriers, cliques)
4. An individual speaker may be a member of several speech communities, a master of several dialects.
5. Each of the dialects within a speaker's idiolect reveals something about the speaker.
6. Dialects vary as the situation varies by:
   a. Person speaking
   b. Region or country
   c. Sex of speaker
   d. Age of speaker
   e. Occupation or social level of speaker
   f. Educational level of speaker
   g. Time at which language was spoken or written
   h. Medium used--spoken or written language
   i. Intent
7. There is a need to transcend dialect differences to make social interaction more effective between varying dialect groups.

APPROACH:

1. Discuss the difference between usage and dialect.
2. Review the controversy over "standards" and relate the controversy to the concept of dialect.
3. Summarize major concepts revealed from the groups and the entire concept of dialect.
4. Lead from this concept into the idea of stereotyping.

The two terms "usage" and "dialect" are not exclusive as may be pointed out in Allen's concept of the five dimensions of language. The dimension of time and space has direct relevance to this discussion. The dialect concept takes into account the problem of divided usage. The dialect concept should free the students from the idea that all departures from a fixed standard are perforce wrong, and should allow them to attain a linguistic versatility which is the counterpart of the social versatility characteristic of the educated man in a democracy.

Sample Presentation

Many people would be shocked if someone told them they were making the language. They have the vague idea that some people know what is right and wrong about language and that this is recorded in books, mainly in dictionaries and grammars. If you want to know what is right, look it up.

But, the business of people who prepare usage books is to describe rather than to prescribe the way the language should be used according to their own ideas. (A good dictionary editor will keep his own feelings out of the definitions of a word, will consult hundreds of instances of occurrences of the word.)

We should recognize variations of speech--the people want and need an adaptable language and they have built one. It is up to a book maker to say they should or should not have a varied language. His business is to observe, record, and systematize the evidence of how they use it, when they use it, where they use it, and if possible, why they use it. Nothing in language is "right" or "wrong" except as usage makes it so. Doing this is no small job, since language changes so rapidly that no matter how alert editors or authors are, their book is becoming absolete even before it can be printed.

Let's remember that people make the language and that people learn the native language from each other. If you isolate a group of people for a long enough time, eventually they will grow to talk like each other. What they talk we call a dialect, i.e., a language noticeably different from other forms of the same language.

Dialects Should Be Treated As Additive, Not As Substitution

KINDS OF DIALECTS

There are several possible ways for dialects to develop. Individuals are self-deployed in a number of roles . . . they are not one person, but several, each elicited by the environment in which they find themselves (social, vocational, recreational, etc.). They organize their oral and non-oral behavior in terms of the expectancies of the group. These groups are held together by ties of common interest. Each group tends to develop peculiarities of speech which have the symbolic function of somehow distinguishing the group from the larger group into which its members might be too completely absorbed. To say "He talks like us" is almost equivalent to saying "He is one of us." A dialect, then, is any set of language forms characteristic of the speech of a part of a whole language community, that is, of a sub-group of a culture.

Dr. Allen has pointed out that a dialect may be horizontal; that is, it may constitute a variety of language peculiar to a particular geographical region. A dialect may also be vertical; that is, it may constitute a variety peculiar to a social, educational, occupational, age, sex, or other specialized group. You will probably discover that dialects might include: ethnic, regional, socio-economic, occupational, age-sex, educational, and avocational dialects.

REVIEW

Terms students should be familiar with from other units. See 1008 if necessary.

Dialect--"The variety of language spoken by the members of a single homogeneous speech--community. A language is usually a collection of dialects, spoken by the members of different speech-communities, sharing the main structural features of the language, but differing to a greater or less degree in details of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary.

A. Dialects spoken in speech-communities occupying different parts of the general territory of a language are regional dialects.

B. Dialects spoken showing a foreign language influence are ethnic dialects.

C. Dialects spoken by different social groups within the same region are social or class dialects.

D. Dialects spoken by different occupational groups are occupational dialects.

E. Dialects spoken by different age groups are age-dialects.

G. A dialect admired and emulated by the speakers of other dialects is a prestige dialect.

H. A dialect generally admitted by the majority of speakers to be superior to all the other dialects in its language is the standard dialect of that language, or simply the standard language. It is usually that used by the educated and ruling classes.

I. A dialect used primarily by writers and scholars is a literary dialect.

Reinforce the idea that dialects are additive, not substitution. Also try to get the class to realize that dialect groups aren't separable from one another. Regional dialects also encompass various social, occupational, ethnic, sex, and age dialects as well.

SECTION SEVEN: STEREOTYPING

CONCEPTS:

1. Social stereotyping is a constant phenomenon of judgments based on the interpretation of speech. Such stereotyping is useful, and also destructive.
2. All varieties of usage should not be construed as class levels.
3. Stereotyping (forwarding tentative categorization on the basis of a attributes) is a natural part of language learning.
4. Stereotyping can result in the forming of dangerous inferences based on the overlooking of individual differences.
5. We can develop our ability to draw useful conclusions about people from their speech, and to aboid ignorant conclusions, Continuous refinement of categories is necessary to aboid the dangers of stereotyping.

Sample Presentation

The term stereotype is not new to you, I'm sure. For the moment we'll not worry about a definition of the term as it will develop in this unit. In fact, after doing some reading and thinking about what you read, you'll try to work out a good definition.

Right now I want you to remember what we had to say earlier in the unit about categories of reference. (See page 18.) We build up categories of persons too. This comes close to what we think of stereotypes. Now then, who can give me an example of a stereotype.

(Examples from direct experience and from mass media should suggest themselves here.)

Write Questions on Chalkboard

1. What is the purpose of categorization?

   (To anticipate the future.)

NOTE: In class discussion emphasize that man cannot view everything as unique or else he would lose the ability to produce orderliness. Also emphasize that often categories are too broad to be accurate.

2. What are the advantages of categorization?

   (Attempts to predict the future and confirms expectations.)

3. What are the disadvantages of categorization?

   (Different people see things in different ways, etc.)

Using "Extensional Orientation" by S.I Hayakawa (see following pages)

Sample Introduction

We have seen that the categories we set up serve a useful purpose, but we have also seen that there are some risks involved in categorization. We may for instance, set up a category which simply is too broad to be of much use. All members of one major political party may be characterized as shifty-eyed opportunists looking for a chance to make a fast buck. Members of the other major party may be categorized as shrieking old women who wear high-topped shoes. In these and numerous other instances, our categories can cloud our thinking.

Distribute copies of S.I. Hayakawa's "Extensional Orientation" in Language in Action (N.Y.: Harcourt brace, 1941.)

Distribute excerpt. Excerpt was included in 1008. If used there, omit

The selection you will read now is one approach to controlling the categories we establish. Although it has rather an imposing title, I think you'll find the selection interesting to read.

NOTE: After the Hayakawa article has been read and discussed try to lead the class to the conclusion that a stereotype is faulty categorization, demonstrably faulty. Emphasize that to criticize stereotyping is to criticize the adequacy of the category, not to criticize the process of categorization

As you read, decide in what way this selection could be thought of as an expansion of the comments on categories you read in the Brown and Lenneberg article. Pay special attention to the sub-headings which are set off and underlined in the selection.

Most of all notice that the author urges us to examine the facts behind the words we use and the categories we set up. Keep his suggestions in mind, since I'm going to ask you to use these in forming an explanation of what we mean by stereotype.

The Sources of Stereotypes

Sample Presentation

Whether we wish to admit it or not, each of us has his own stereotypes as well as his own categories of reference. We've seen something of how the categories get built up earlier in this unit. Stereotypes undoubtedly come from the same sources as our other categories--the persons around us, our direct experiences, our vicarious experiences.

Concluding remarks and discussion:

It is suggested that the reacher re-introduce the statements on the importance of language listed on page 7. If the students have added any subsequent statements, part of the concluding discussion could be built around the additions. Not all the statements need be taken up, although each of them has some applicability.

(Unit 1203 - THE SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LANGUAGE)

OUTLINE OF CONCEPTS AND GENERALIZATIONS PRESENTED FOR USE IN EVALUATION PROCEDURES

1. Man is a symbol-using animal. Language makes man human.

2. Symbolic activity is essential to man's nature; he finds it necessary both to make and to use symbols.

3. Language is consequential to the nature of man and the species.

4. Man's use of language is both time-binding and space-binding.

5. Language not only characterizes mankind but also divides it.

6. Significant differences exist between animal and human communication.

7. The term language is usually applied to the system of learned, conventional oral symbols held in common by the members of some community for the conduct of relatively precise patterns of human interaction (Smith definition). It can be viewed as a social product and as personal behavior.

8. Children fully learn, although without conscious knowledge of its structure, the patterns of their native language.

9. Language facilitates social organization.

10. A culture's values are reflected in its language.

11. The portion of reality we see affects our language; in turn, our language is a guide to how we see reality.

12. Language tends to encourage thought along culturally acceptable lines and to limit thought along culturally unacceptable lines.

13. Language mediates the interaction of an individual and society.

14. Language tends to mold individuals to the norms of society.

15. Language is one of the major factors determining human group affiliations.

16. The speaker's behavior affects the listener's behavior and the listener's behavior affects the speaker's, thus giving rise to the phenomenon of circular response (feedback) in the speech act.

17. The symbols produced by a speaker always stir up meanings for the speaker somewhat different from those stirred up for the listeners. Thus speech produces an area of shared meaning and an area of meaning not shared.

18. The major functions of speech are sharing information, influencing belief and action, engaging in acts of inquiry or discovery, sharing experience, and relieving social tension.

19. Because meaning is not totally shared, some level of misunderstanding or non-understanding characterizes all effort at speaking.

20. Differences in the interpretation of symbols arise from differences of experience with these symbols.

21. Misunderstanding is increased by various tendencies, habits, and situations.

22. People do draw inferences based on uses of language.

23. A person's speech is an indicator of his group affiliations (age, sex, educational background, economic status, occupation, etc.)

24. Our speech (language) provides major evidence by which others judge our personality (intention, ability, termperament, etc.)

25. Language has heterogeneity, that is, for many forms there are alternatives, which correlate with a variety of non-linguistic features of the milieu--place, social position, formality, type of occasion, purposes, etc. The study of these correlations is usage.

26. Language operates on various levels of usage, largely dependent on social and educational factors.

27. Change in language is a result of the individual altering contemporary language; resistance to change comes in the form of the traditional language and society.

28. "Correctness" in usage is a social matter, based largely on the usages of educated speakers.

29. Varieties of usage exist in both Standard and Non-Standard American English.

30 Language is five dimensional (Allen's concept):

   a. Here-There
   b. Now-Then
   c. Written-Spoken
   d. Formal-Informal
   e. Standard-Non-Standard

31. Usage varies according to familiar or formal function (Joos' continuum).

32. An individual's usage should be flexible enough to adapt to the various functions.

33. Linguistic differences create and are created by dimensions of social distance.

34. Language is used as a means of group identification.

35. Language is used as a means of excluding non-group members (barriers, cliques).

36. An individual speaker may be a member of several speech communities, a master of several dialects.

37. Each of the dialects within a speaker's idiolect reveals something about the speaker.

38. Dialects vary as the situation varies by:

    a. Person speaking
    b. Region or country
    c. Sex of speaker
    d. Age of speaker
    e. Occupation of social level of speaker
    f. Educational level of speaker
    g. Time at which language was spoken or written
    h. Medium used-spoken or written language
    i. Intent-formal or informal

39. There is a need to transcend dialect differences to make social interaction more effective between varying dialect groups.

40. Social stereotyping is a constant phenomenon of judgments based on the interpretation of speech.

41. Such stereotyping is useful, and also destructive.

42. Functional varieties should not be misconstrued as class levels.

43. Stereotyping (forwarding tentative categorization on the basis of a few attributes) is a natural part of language learning.

44. Stereotyping can result in the forming of dangerous inferences based on the overlooking of individual differences.

45. We can develop our ability to draw useful conclusions about people from their speech, and to avoid ignorant conclusions. Continuous refinement of categories is necessary to avoid the dangers of stereotyping.

CONCEPTS STRESSED IN OPTIONAL SECTIONS

1. By naming elements of his environment, man attains a sense of power over it.

2. Man's concept of self in relation to society is linguistically mediated; he may use language to alter his view of reality, or society may use language to impose its view upon him.

3. Language serves as a signal of sociability and a means of social cohesion.

4. Language signals the degree of acceptance or rejection of individual responsibility, providing a means of changing social position or achieving social mobility.

ADDENDUM A

Language and Pathologies

The more able student may be interested in exploring the relation between language and abnormal personality patterns which the psychologists deal with. Great care should be taken that the student does not become a "psuedo-psychologist" and feel that he can analyze people solely by the language they use. There are many excellent discussions of the relations to language and the pathologies which the teacher could refer the student to.

Chapter 8 - "Progressions and Pathologies" in WORDS AND THINGS by Roger Brown deals with the language of aphasia, and schizophrenia.

Section 7 - "Pathologies of Linguistic Behavior: in PSYCHOLINGUISTICS by Sol Saporta includes the following articles:

"Operant Stuttering: The Control of Stuttering Behavior Through Response-Contingent Consequences"

"Aphasia as a Linguistic Problem"

"The Nature of Language Deficit in Aphasia"

"Grammatical Complexity and Aphasic Speech"

A Pilot Study of Aphasia Among Bilinguals"

Section 8 - "Personality Disorders and Their Treatment" in CONTRIBUTIONS TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY by Dulany, DeValois, Beardslee, and Winterbottom includes the following articles:

"An Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Experience"

"The Development of Paranoic Thinking"

"A Case of Multiple Personality"

Any text on the processes of psychoanalysis would also point up quite clearly the importance of language in the study of human personality.

The general text ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY AND MODERN LIFE by Coleman is also very helpful in understanding the relation between language and personality development.

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